BIANCA

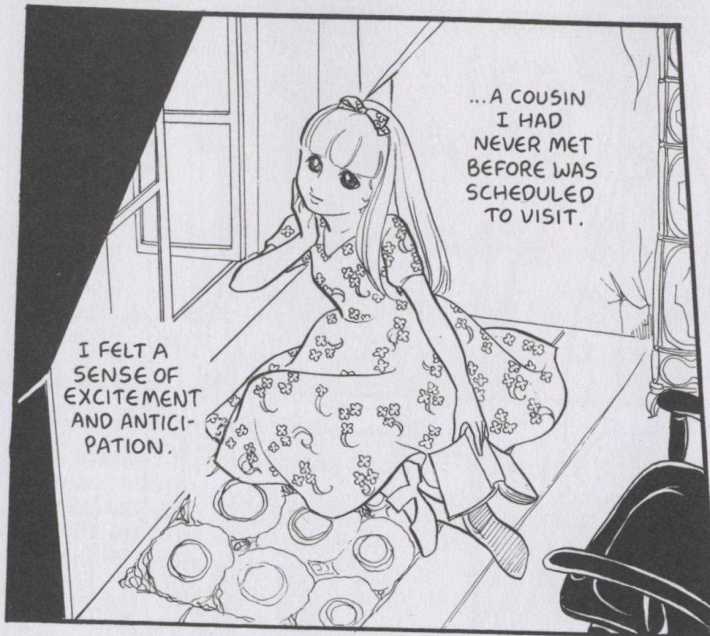
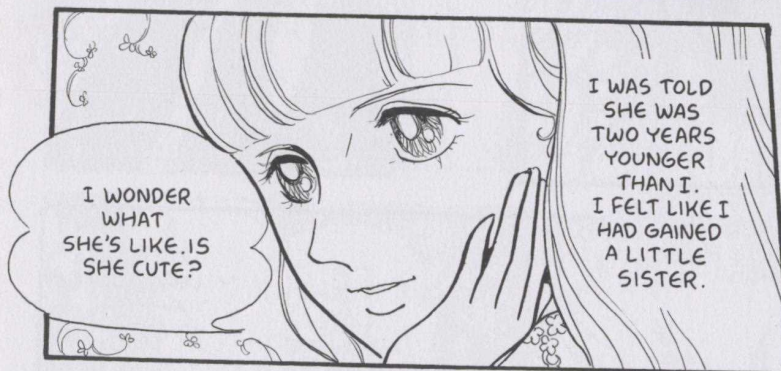
SHE'S ALMOST LIKE SOME KIND OF DRYAD.
MS. CLARA HEIMER, I'VE NOTICED THAT THE SAME GIRL APPEARS IN MANY OF YOUR SYLVAN PAINTINGS. WHO IS SHE?

THAT IS A FRIEND FROM LONG, LONG AGO.

YES, IT WAS SOME FORTY YEARS AGO.
BIANCA AUSTIN.

YOU MUST... YOU MUST HAVE VERY FOND MEMORIES OF HER. I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR FACE.

I WAS RAISED IN AN OLD, COUNTRY HOME WITH A ROSE GARDEN.

ONE SUMMER MORNING, WHEN I WAS TWELVE YEARS OLD...

...A COUSIN I HAD NEVER MET BEFORE WAS SCHEDULED TO VISIT.
I FELT A SENSE OF EXCITEMENT AND ANTICI-PATION.

I WAS TOLD SHE WAS TWO YEARS YOUNGER THAN I. I FELT LIKE I HAD GAINED A LITTLE SISTER.
I WONDER WHAT SHE'S LIKE. IS SHE CUTE?

CLARA!

COME DOWN AND MEET YOUR COUSIN, BIANCA!

THIS IS MY DAUGHTER, CLARA. PLEASE, COME IN.
HELLO.

BIANCA HAD GREEN EYES AND CHESTNUT BROWN CURLS.
BIANCA CAME ALONE.

NOW YOU JUST ENJOY YOUR STAY HERE UNTIL YOUR PARENTS FINISH THEIR WORK AND COME FOR YOU.
NICE VILLAGE, DON'T YOU THINK, BIANCA?
YES, THE FOREST IS LOVELY.

SPIN

HM

I HOPE WE CAN BE GOOD FRIENDS, BIANCA.

TMP

BIANCA? ARE YOU GOING OUT-SIDE?
WAIT! YOU NEED A HAT.

HA HA

SHE RAN OUT. I SUPPOSE SHE LIKES THE OUTDOORS. I'D RATHER STAY INSIDE AND PAINT OR READ MYSELF.

SO THEY'RE BREAKING UP?
THAT'S WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE. POOR THING.

WHO'S A POOR THING?
T-TM
CLARA !
SHH!

IT'S GROWN-UP TALK, DEAR.
NOW RUN ALONG.
...? ALL RIGHT.

BIANCA! WHERE ARE YOU?
REALLY. SHE'S ALWAYS RUNNING AROUND OUTSIDE.
YOU THINK SHE COULD AT LEAST PLAY WITH ME ON A RAINY DAY, PAINTING OR SOMETHING.
BIAN-CA-A-A
BIA...?
KREE

HELLO, BIANCA IN THE MIRROR!

HOW'S THE WEATHER OVER THERE?

EVERYTHING'S BACKWARDS IN THE MIRROR, SO IT'S VERY SUNNY TODAY.

HOW NICE! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
TO THE FOREST. WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME ALONG?

CLARA!

BIANCA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

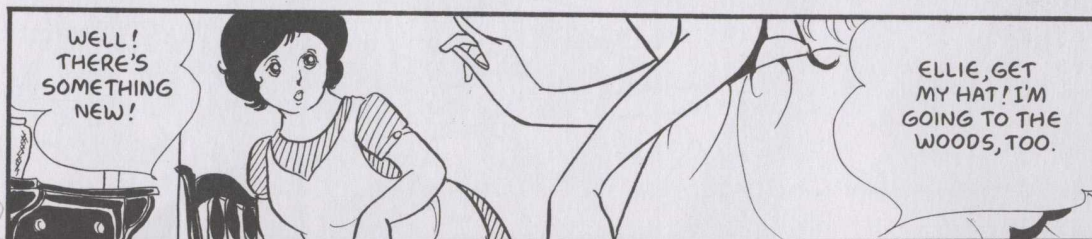
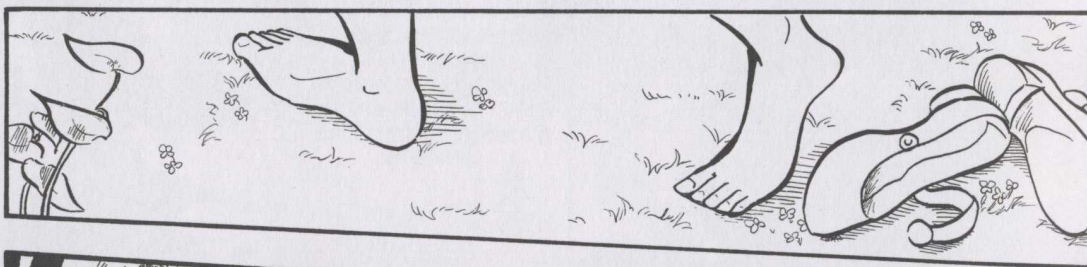
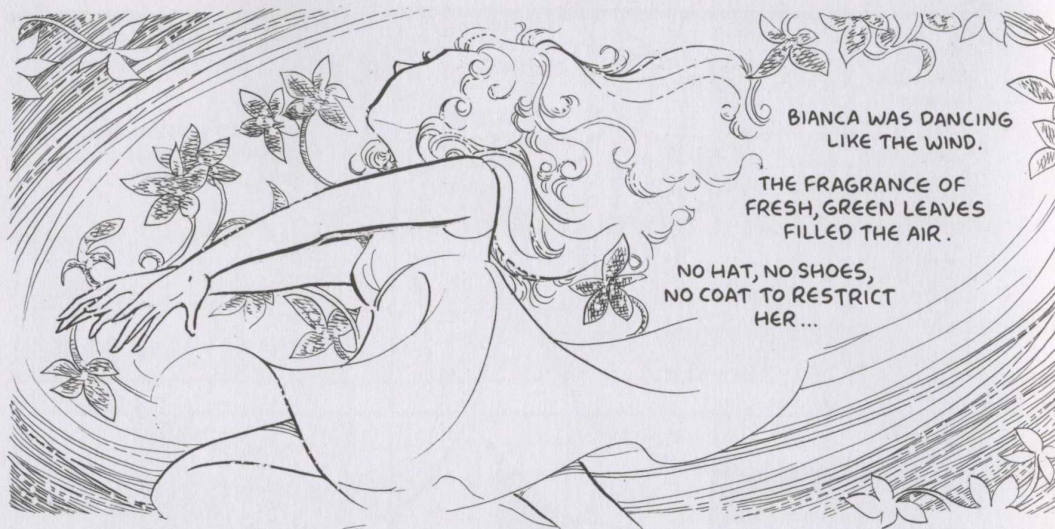
HA-HA HA HA
YOU DO THE STRANGEST THINGS!
SO IT'S SUNNY INSIDE THE MIRROR? I HAD NO IDEA!

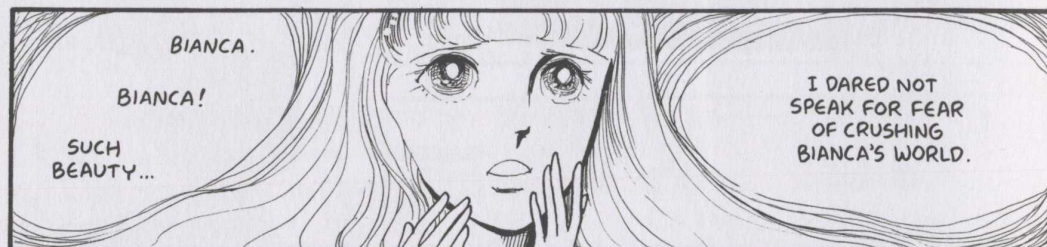
SMACK

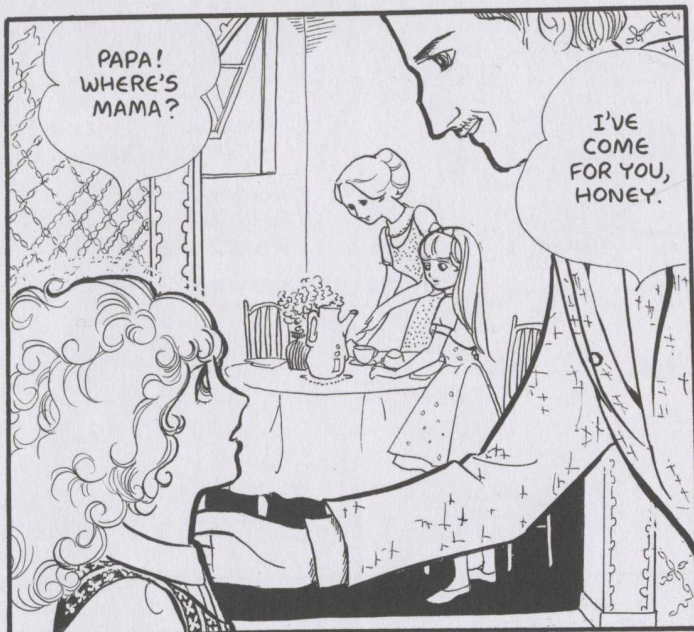
WELL, YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO HIT ME! I HATE YOU!
MAMA!

THIS IS NO FUN AT ALL. AND I JUST TRIED TO BE FRIENDS!
LITTLE SAVAGE! AND TO THINK SHE'S MY COUSIN!

SHE'S RUN OFF TO THE WOODS AGAIN.
BIANCA CERTAINLY LOVES THE FOREST.
WHY DON'T YOU GO WITH HER, CLARA?

I WONDER WHAT SHE DOES IN THE WOODS.
JUST WALKING? OR SOMETHING ELSE...?

ELLIE, GET MY HAT! I'M GOING TO THE WOODS, TOO.
WELL! THERE'S SOMETHING NEW!

BIANCA
?

BIANCA WAS DANCING LIKE THE WIND.
THE FRAGRANCE OF FRESH, GREEN LEAVES FILLED THE AIR.
NO HAT, NO SHOES, NO COAT TO RESTRICT HER...

BIANCA.
BIANCA!
SUCH BEAUTY...
I DARED NOT SPEAK FOR FEAR OF CRUSHING BIANCA'S WORLD.

I FINALLY UNDERSTOOD WHY SHE HAD SLAPPED ME IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR. I HAD LAUGHED AT BIANCA'S DREAMS...
I HAD SHATTERED BIANCA'S WORLD.
... BIANCA!

BIANCA...

THAT WAS THE FIRST AND LAST TIME I SAW BIANCA DANCE IN THE FOREST.

THE NEXT MORNING, BIANCA'S FATHER CAME, AND BIANCA...

BIANCA'S PAPA AND MAMA--
TMP
HUSH, CLARA! IT'S NO CONCERN OF CHILDREN!
KLAK
BIANCA KNEW ALL ALONG.
WHY ELSE WOULD SUCH A CHEERFUL GIRL WHO LOVES THE WOODS CLOSE HERSELF OFF THAT WAY?
EVERY DAY MUST HAVE BEEN TERRIBLE FOR HER! HAVING HER PARENTS SPLIT UP LIKE THAT...
BAM!
BIANCA!
NO CONCERN OF CHILDREN?
BIANCA'S EVEN YOUNGER THAN ME!

EVENING CAME, AND BIANCA STILL HADN'T RETURNED.
THE ADULTS WENT OUT TO SEARCH THE FOREST.

JUST AS THE STARS WERE COMING OUT, THEY RETURNED, CARRYING HER SMALL, LIFELESS BODY.
BIANCA'S PAPA WAS WITH THEM.

SHE MUST SLIPPED AND FALLEN OFF A CLIFF.
HER HANDS WERE STILL CLASPING TWIGS AND GRASS, AS IF SHE HAD BEEN HANGING ON FOR LIFE.

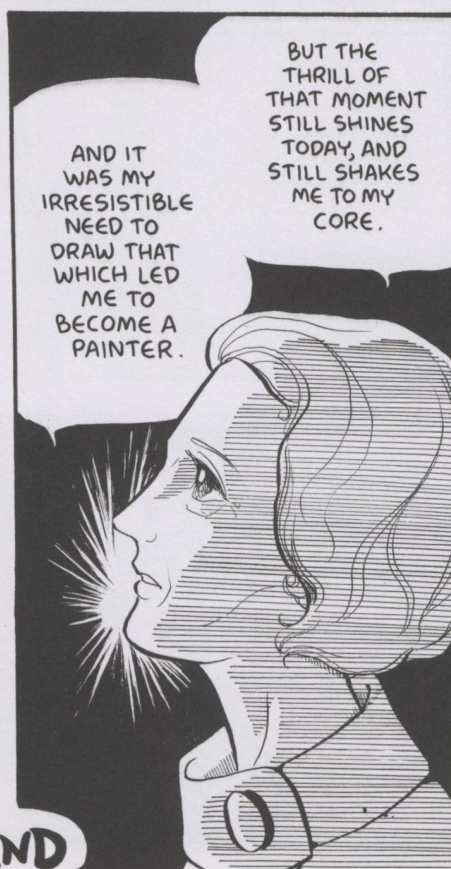
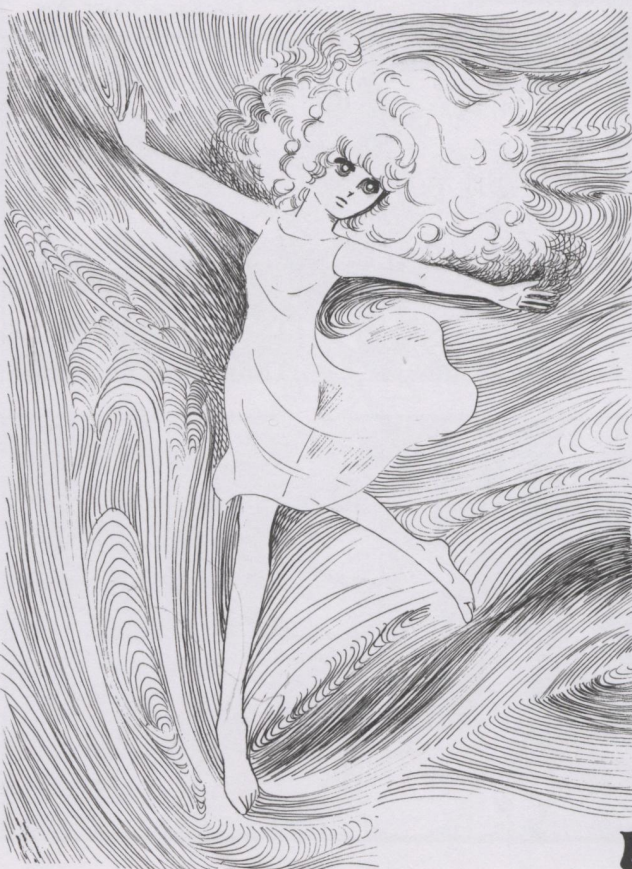
SHE HAD PROBABLY CALLED OUT FOR HELP...
...BUT THE FOREST SWALLOWED UP HER CRY, AND BIANCA DIED IN THE FOREST.

CLARA!

MAMA.
WHAT IS IT, CLARA?
BIANCA!
A GIRL WHO SHARED MY LIFE FOR JUST SEVEN DAYS.
A GIRL WHO WAS THERE BEFORE ME FOR JUST SEVEN DAYS
THE FOREST SUCKED IN BIANCA'S SPIRIT.
I KNOW. I SAW.
I SAW WHAT SHE DID IN THE FOREST.
IF I WERE THE FOREST...
...I WOULDN'T WANT TO LET HER GO. I WOULD HAVE MADE HER DIE IN THE FOREST EVEN IF IT MEANT THROWING HER IN THE RIVER OR BURYING HER IN THE SOIL.

THIS LITTLE GIRL, BIANCA, WHO MADE HER WAY INTO THE DEPTHS OF MY SOUL IN THE SPACE OF JUST SEVEN DAYS.

AND THAT IS WHY I PAINT THIS LITTLE GIRL.

BIANCA, WHO DANCED IN THE FOREST.
THE WAY SHE DANCED...THE WAY IT MADE ME FEEL...I CAN'T DESCRIBE IT IN WORDS.
I SAW THE WIND. I SAW A DANCER. I SAW THE WORLD OF A GIRL WHO HAD BECOME ONE WITH THE FOREST.
I STILL CAN'T DESCRIBE IT. THE ONLY WITNESSES WERE THE FOREST AND ME.

BUT THE THRILL OF THAT MOMENT STILL SHINES TODAY, AND STILL SHAKES ME TO MY CORE.
AND IT WAS MY IRRESISTIBLE NEED TO DRAW THAT WHICH LED ME TO BECOME A PAINTER.
END